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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8400  
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//  
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001162

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WHA/EPSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; T.I.P. REPORT; MIDDLE EAST;  
ARGENTINE-VENEZUELAN TIES 06/13/07

#### 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international opinion pieces today include the Argentina section in the Trafficking in Persons report issued by the Department of State; what the U.S. and other leading countries are doing to put an end to the current flare-up in the Middle East; and Argentine First Lady Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's comments on Argentina's economic growth and its ties to the Chavez's Venezuela.

#### 2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Criticism of the country focused on the T.I.P."  
Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (06/13) "In the US view, Susana Trimarco de Veron is one of the eight 'heroes who are acting to put an end to modern slavery' all over the world. She is still looking for her daughter, Marita, who was kidnapped five years ago by a prostitution ring protected by politicians, police officers and judges from Argentina's northwestern region.  
"Susana Trimarco de Veron's accomplishments were acknowledged in the 'Trafficking in Persons' Report, which was issued by the US Department of State and which criticized the work carried out by Argentina's national and provincial governments for their lack of willingness to put an end to the problem.  
"According to the report, 'Argentina is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor,' which places the country on a 'watch list' along with Mexico, Egypt, China, Libya, Russia, Cambodia, Armenia and Mozambique, among others.  
"... The (US) central point of criticism of Argentina is the delay of its Congress in passing legislation to fight trafficking in persons. A second-ranking USG official told 'La Nacion,' 'it is hard to think of any legislator who could be against such legislation.'  
- "A history of mistakes"  
Marcelo Cantelmi, leading "Clarín's" international editor, opines (06/13) "One of the aspects that contributes to the current crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Middle East is the US impetus to encourage democracy in that region, which only seems valid as long as power is in the hands of those blessed by the White House. And this has not been the case.  
"In January 2006, Hamas obtained a landslide election victory... The immediate reaction was a total financial blockade imposed on all the territories and particularly the Gaza Strip. Tension mounted in an increasingly complex scenario... and after that the war against Hezbollah took place, which left it with a feeling of victory that reinforced the role of Iran's Shiite theocracy in the region...  
"By the end of last year, the first clashes between Hamas and Al Fatah occurred due to pressures for new elections in order to remove extremist Muslims from power. A solution including a government of unity seemed to cool down the crisis, but, again, the US, Israel and Europe chose to reinforce the blockade, thereby blocking a political

way out that could have deprived hawks some power. The barrel [of oil] has been lit and now the flame seems unlikely to extinguish."  
- "Cristina Kirchner defends Chavez"

Luis Lauge, on special assignment in Geneva for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (06/13) "... Cristina Kirchner bluntly defended both the Kirchner administration's 'model for growth' as well as Argentina's ties to the Hugo Chavez's Venezuela.

"During the Qs-and-As segment following her speech at the International Labor Organization, she said 'Venezuela cannot be absent from integration nor can we overlook (the fact) that it is one of the largest oil producing countries in the world. As long as (Venezuela) sticks to democracy, we should not be carried away by phantoms.'

"... While Daniel Funes de Rioja, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body and Chairperson of the Employers' Group, underscored Cristina Kirchner's professional and political background, every attendee knew quite well that they were meeting with an almost certain presidential candidate and, although she did not say it, she behaved in that manner."

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